

Crystal Report or MS Word?

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- *From:* "jmar" <jmarzion@xxxxxxxx>
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I posted a week ago and received one response. I'm looking for the opinion of several experienced .NET people before I proceed so I'm posting again. Sorry for the repost...

I am updating a VB4.0 quote generation program to VB.net. The old program takes user inputs, performs calculations, saves the data to Access databases and uses Crystal Reports 5.0 to generate a quote. A while back users obviously wanted to be able to edit/e-mail the quote (these ancient Crystal 5.0 reports don't allow PDF creation) so I modified the old VB4.0 code to allow users to save the Crystal Report as Word document which they can then edit/e-mail from Word. This works

OK but there are two big downfalls: 1) the initial report data is saved in the database and the modifications made in Word are not so you

end up with database data that isn't accurate 2) The conversion of the Crystal Report to Word is clunky – the Word document that is generated is touchy when it comes to editing – blocks of data move in an unpredictable fashion when data is added.

As I upgrade this program to VB.net, I am trying to clean up this whole

issue. Users have loved the ability to edit/e-mail so I'm thinking the

way to go in VB.net is to forego storing in databases and simply have my application fill in a Word Template with the quote data. Instead of

a database with quote data, they end up with a collection of Word Documents, each representing an individual quote.

I need some input – feel free to offer your comments/suggestions on any

or all of the following:

1) Is this a good idea? Am I overlooking an advantage to the database

method?

2) Does anyone have any links/samples that show me how to easily fill

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a Word Template from VB.Net 2003?

3) Can I set up the Bill of Material part of my template such that if a

user changes the cost of a line item the TOTAL is changed at the bottom? If so, how?

4) Has anyone who has done this before have any words of wisdom/experiences they could share as to the difficulty/issues they faced?

Thanks in advance for any help...

Jmar

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